schools at Athens and in Alexandria and the interpersonal relations in the latter are discussed in a separate chapter.

There are a few doubts to be raised. Certainty cannot be claimed for the assumption that the distinction between matter and nature was inaugurated by the Neoplatonists (p. 88). Let it suffice to refer only to Aristotle, who used the term φύσις in many senses. On discussing the relation between Philoponus and Ammonius, one could have mentioned that the latter also made a considerable effort to adjust Neoplatonic theory to Christian doctrines. Finally, one might sorely miss the proper discussion of the doctrines of thinkers such as Simplicius at Athens and Philoponus of Alexandria. There may be no doubt that they gave new dimensions to Neoplatonism.

The book offers an excellent introduction to the subject. It also contains a short but adequate bibliography and indices.

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THE HYMNS OF PROCLUS

R. M. VAN DEN BERG: *Proclus' Hymns: Essays, Translations, Commentary*. Pp. xvi + 341. Leiden, Boston, and Cologne: Brill, 2001. Cased, €87. ISBN: 90-04-12236-2.

This volume in Brill's respected 'Philosophia Antiqua' series is a 'lightly revised' version of the author's Leiden doctoral thesis. The first part contains an introduction and five essays (Chapters 1–6) dealing with various topics concerning hymns and theurgy (pp. 3–142). The second part contains texts, translations, and line-by-line commentaries for the seven Proclean hymns (pp. 145–314).

The opening chapter functions as a general introduction. Chapter 2 introduces the range of meanings given to the term 'hymn' (ὕμνος) by various Neoplatonists, considers the characteristics of a specifically philosophical hymn, and examines the place of hymns in Neoplatonic worship. Chapter 3 attempts to locate the various gods that appear in the hymns in the complex hierarchy of Neoplatonic ontology and B. supplies a helpful table (p. 40). Chapter 4 outlines the Neoplatonic theory of theurgy and discusses its greater prominence in Neoplatonism after Iamblichus. Chapter 5 considers the significance of theurgy for an understanding of the Proclean hymns. Chapter 6 concludes the first half of the volume with a discussion of Proclus' own theory of poetry and touches upon the apparent paradox inherent in being a Platonist who writes poetry.

Although these opening chapters contain much of interest, there is little to unify them. As is entirely appropriate in a volume of this sort, they simply offer background information relevant to the hymns themselves rather than an independent study of the hymns in their own right. The core of the volume, then, is the edition of the hymns. Each of the seven hymns comes with an introduction, text, translation, an analysis of the hymn's structure, and a line-by-line commentary. The text of the hymns is simply reprinted from Vogt (Wiesbaden, 1957), with a few minor departures noted; there is no critical apparatus.

As B. makes clear, the hymns form part of a theurgy designed to enable one to bridge the gap between the human soul and the realm of Nous (p. 49), a problem specific to later Athenian Neoplatonism after Iamblichus' rejection of Plotinus' claim that part of the human soul remains connected to Nous (p. 47). Perhaps surprisingly,

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then, there is a sense in which these hymns form part of a response to a primarily epistemological problem; namely, how one gains knowledge of the Forms.

However, B. also reports that the only proper 'hymn' for the highest god will not be verbal but rather an attempt to become like him (p. 18). Therefore Proclus' hymns must be addressed only to lower gods (p. 38). We are also told that the Neoplatonists understood metaphysical speculation or 'doing philosophy' as itself a form of hymn, indeed, the most appropriate form of hymn (p. 26). In other words, Proclus' own philosophical activities would have constituted a 'hymn'. A question remains unanswered, then: if these claims are correct, why would Proclus choose to write his hymns? His properly philosophical 'hymn' to the One would be either his spiritual way of life or his metaphysical texts (just as Plato's *Timaeus* was thought to be a hymn [pp. 23–6]). If this is the case, then one is inclined to ask why Proclus also felt the need to produce his somewhat poor poetry.

The answer to this would presumably be that Proclus was concerned to pay due respect to the plethora of minor gods in Neoplatonic theology. What becomes unclear at this point is how this practice relates to Proclus *qua* philosopher (and, by extension, why these texts deserve a place in the series 'Philosophia Antiqua'). Although no doubt an interesting episode in the history of ancient religious practices, the philosophical value or relevance of these texts is not directly addressed. Precisely how might these verses contribute to a theurgy designed to raise the human soul out of the material world and towards Nous? Or, if they are only addressed to minor deities, what is their philosophical function in that particular context? Although B. offers a helpful discussion of a number of topics relevant to an understanding of these hymns, further comment on their philosophical status might have been in order.

The volume as a whole is neither a new critical edition of the hymns nor an extended study of the hymns. On the one hand there is (as I have noted) no critical apparatus, nor is there any account of the MSS or an *index verborum* (perhaps surprising given that these are relatively short texts). On the other hand, the opening essays lack a sense of unity. Having said that, no doubt the volume will prove useful to those studying these texts in any detail. In particular, the line-by-line commentary may prove to be of most use.

The use of author–date references in the footnotes but not in the bibliography can be somewhat awkward at times.

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MARINUS' LIFE OF PROCLUS

H. D. Saffrey, A.-Ph. Segonds, C. Luna (edd.): *Marinus:* Proclus, ou sur le Bonheur. *Texte établi, traduit et annoté*. Pp. clxxvi + 236. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2001.

Were it not for the *Proclus, or on Happiness* of Marinus, we might never know how typical it was for the Platonist of later antiquity to live obscurely in the public eye. Because it records the public benefactions of its hero as well as his literary enterprises, the work is of equal interest to the historian of affairs and to the historian of ideas; because it exhibits more conventional artifice than personal art, it is not so great a work as, but it is a far more representative one than, Porphyry's famous memoir of Plotinus. Nevertheless it has seldom been read for its own sake, even after partial amends were made in Masullo's able commentary of 1985. Stray

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